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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6200

February 13, 2019

VIA ELECTRONIC TRANSMISSION

The Honorable Jerome Powell
Chair
Federal Reserve

Dear Chairman Powell,

The Senate Finance Committee has a constitutional responsibility to engage in vigilant oversight of entities and government agencies within its jurisdiction. A critical issue facing the Committee and the country is the extent to which the Russian government engaged in efforts designed to undermine our political system and governmental policy through obfuscation and manipulation.

According to a Reuters news report, Maria Butina, who recently pled guilty in federal court for conspiracy to act as a foreign agent in the United States, and Alexander Torshin met with Obama administration officials from the Treasury Department and the Federal Reserve in 2015.¹ At the time, Mr. Torshin was Deputy Governor of the Central Bank of the Russian Federation and later, in April 2018, he was added to a list of Russian nationals sanctioned by the Treasury Department. The meetings, reportedly arranged by the Center for the National Interest, a self-described bipartisan, tax exempt entity,² are said to have involved Stanley Fischer, then Federal Reserve Vice Chairman, and Nathan Sheets, then Treasury Undersecretary for International Affairs.³ Ms. Butina and Mr. Torshin reportedly discussed U.S.-Russia economic relations with Mr. Fischer and Mr. Sheets.⁴

¹ Sarah N. Lynch, Exclusive: Alleged Russian agent Butina met with U.S. Treasury, Fed officials, *Reuters*, July 22, 2018, available at www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-russia-butina-exclusive/exclusive-accused-russian-agent-butina-met-with-u-s-treasury-fed-officials-idUSKBN1KC0DC.

² Bob Davis, Butina, Fed's Fischer In Meeting Together, *Wall Street Journal*, July 23, 2018; <https://www.wsj.com/articles/alleged-russian-agent-maria-butina-was-at-2015-meeting-with-top-fed-official-1532300577>.

³ Lynch, *supra* n.1.

⁴ *Id.*

Given what is now known about them from public court filings, it is concerning that Ms. Butina and Mr. Torshin were able to gain access to high-level administration officials to reportedly discuss U.S. Russian economic relations. Furthermore, it is imperative to understand the substance and extent to which Ms. Butina and Mr. Torshin lobbied other administration officials in an effort to change U.S. policy toward Russia or other countries and whether decisions were made as a result of these meetings. Accordingly, in order for the Committee to better understand what transpired between administration and Federal Reserve officials and Ms. Butina, and Mr. Torshin, no later than February 26, 2019, please provide the following:

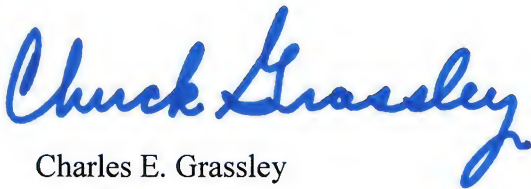
1. All records⁵ relating to all meetings between or among Federal Reserve officials, Ms. Butina, and Mr. Torshin, including those facilitated by or otherwise involving the Center for the National Interest.
2. All records of Mr. Fischer's communications relating to Ms. Butina and Mr. Torshin.
3. How many times did Mr. Fischer meet with Ms. Butina and Mr. Torshin? For each meeting, please list the date, the location, the list of attendees, and provide all records related to each meeting to include all transcripts, memoranda, and communications regarding the meeting.
4. When meeting with Ms. Butina and Mr. Torshin, did Mr. Fischer hold a security clearance? If so, at what level and did any meetings with Ms. Butina and Mr. Torshin take place in a Sensitive Compartmented Information Facility?
5. Please also describe how meetings between or among Federal Reserve Officials, Ms. Butina, and Mr. Torshin differed, if at all, from other similar meetings that Federal Reserve officials may have undertaken with regard to nations other than Russia and foreign nationals other than Mr. Torshin and Ms. Butina.
6. Please provide a copy of Federal Reserve policies that cover the protocols and procedures in place for leadership and staff meetings with foreign officials or representatives of foreign governments. If there is no written policy, please describe those protocols and procedures in a written response. Please also describe whether and to what extent these reported meetings with Ms. Butina and Mr. Torshin complied with policy and procedure.

⁵ "Records" include any written, recorded, or graphic material of any kind, including letters, memoranda, reports, notes, electronic data (emails, email attachments, and any other electronically-created or stored information), calendar entries, interoffice communications, meeting minutes, phone/voice mail or recordings/records of verbal communications, and drafts (whether or not they resulted in final documents).

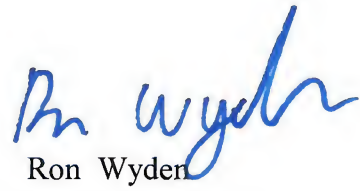
We anticipate that your written reply and most responsive documents will be unclassified. Please send all unclassified material directly to the Committee. In keeping with the requirements of Executive Order 13526, if any of the responsive documents do contain classified information, please segregate all unclassified material within the classified documents, provide all unclassified information directly to the Committee, and provide a classified addendum to the Office of Senate Security. Although the Committee complies with all laws and regulations governing the handling of classified information, it is not bound, absent its prior agreement, by any handling restrictions.

Thank you in advance for your prompt attention to these matters. Should you have any questions, please contact Committee staff at (202) 224-4515.

Sincerely,



Charles E. Grassley
Chairman
Committee on Finance



Ron Wyden
Ranking Member
Committee on Finance